

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Status of All of the Claims

Below is the status of the claims in this application.

1. Claim(s) pending: 1-2, 4-5, and 7-41.
2. Claim(s) canceled: 3 and 6.
3. Claim(s) added: 24-41.
4. Claims withdrawn from consideration but not canceled: None.

Allowable Claims

The Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 6, 8, 9, and 12-14 contained allowable subject matter in item 7. In that regard, the features of dependent claim 6 have been incorporated into independent claim 18, and claim 6 has been canceled. Consequently, it is believed that independent claim 18 and its dependent claims are in condition for allowance. The features of claim 6 have also been incorporated into independent claim 1, and therefore, it is believed that claim 1 and its dependent claims are in condition for allowance.

Dependent claims 8, 12, and 14 have been rewritten into independent form as new independent claims 24, 26, and 28, respectively. It is therefore believed that independent claims 24, 26, and 28 along with their dependent claims are in condition for allowance.

Features from dependent claim 12 have been incorporated into independent claim 29 in order to provide broader protection, and in view of the indication of the allowability of claim 12 in item 7 of the Office Action, it is believed that claim 29 along with its dependent claims are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

It should be understood that the above remarks are not intended to provide an exhaustive basis for patentability or concede the basis for the rejections in the Office Action, but are simply provided to overcome the rejections made in the Office Action in the most expedient fashion.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited. If after reviewing this amendment the Examiner feels that any issues remain which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative by telephone to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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